

someone, with a sense of fair play, ought to warn the men against me.

-- Judy Salinas

Long Beach CA

THE VORTEX

Somewhere out of the distance, unwinds the tense braided sound of a tornado, causing the dog to circle whimpering and the chickens in the yard to test their stumpy wings. The lights flicker in the kitchen, as dark clouds roll and collide, as chaotic as oil stirred into running water. An old pickup truck pulls to the side of a dirt road. Pa and Jimmy, both in overalls, get out fast, running for the deep ravine of the creek bed. Above, a black fist is hopping thumb down across the fields, rubbing out structures, like occasional ants on a checkered tablecloth. Ma and the young ones are in the cellar, holding on to the pickles and preserves. Nobody dares to cry.

Just at the moment when the sky screams and the fist snubs out the ravine, jumping next to the house, which splinters, like a match box under a heavy boot, Dorothy, always ready, lying on her back in the pig sty in between, clicks off a roll capturing the whole event, launching her career in journalism.

SOMEBODY

Somebody looks in a mirror in the morning, thinking how much she resembles somebody in the movies, something chic she had seen in a store window or on television. Later, she hangs up the receiver of the telephone, convinced that she talks like the lyrics of a popular song playing on the radio. When making love, she is pretty certain that she undresses like a centerfold, moves like a peep show. In bed alone at night, she curls up tiny and content, assured that she is cradled in big, strong hands.

-- Greg Boyd

Sepulveda CA